

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election Communique for Chief Official Agents Issue Eight: March 3, 2017

No doubt yesterday will have been as busy a day for all of you as it was for us. I look forward to receiving your input in the weeks ahead, but I was pleased overall with the administration of yesterday's event. I am convinced that a key part of this success had to do with the strong and active lines of communication between my office and yours.

I thanked members of my team here at Elections Saskatchewan this morning but also want to thank you and the members of your teams as well. We will continue to work with, and serve you, throughout the end of the writ period at the level you would expect.

Preliminary Results

As you know, Ryan Meili of the New Democratic Party (N.D.P.) is the successful candidate after the preliminary count. The vote counts are as follows:

- Ryan Meili, N.D.P. – 2,666
- Brent Penner, Saskatchewan Party – 1,962
- Darrin Lamoureux, Liberal Party – 180
- David Prokopchuk, P.C. Party – 62
- Shawn Setyo, Green Party – 53

The final count will be completed on Tuesday, March 13. Absentee and hospital poll votes will be counted and we will release official results at that time.

Turnout, at 40.62 percent of registered voters, and an estimated 38.8 percent of eligible voters, is lower than in the April 2016 general election (where turnout of registered voters was 57.6 percent and of eligible was an estimated 55.3 percent). By-elections traditionally have lower turnout than general elections, so while this is not unexpected, turnout in the 40 percent range in any type of election should be cause for concern. You can expect to see me continue to push for further public discussion among our stakeholders on the problem of low voter turnout that was considered in the first volume of our Report on the 28th General Election.

I'd also note that 1,737 votes were cast at advance polls, 35.3 percent of all votes cast. This is an increase from the general election, where province-wide 25.5 percent of votes were cast early.

Advance voting was also up slightly in the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin itself – during the general, about 31 percent of votes came in from advance polls. A shift to advance voting has a significant impact on election administrators who need to accommodate increased demand, but it also has an effect on political parties. I think we all need to consider what this means and it may be a topic we should discuss at our annual meeting this summer.

Key Dates

Just a few reminders of some key dates related to the by-election:

- Tuesday, March 14 – The final count will be held at the returning office. I will be in touch with more details next week.
- Saturday, March 25 – The returning officer will return the writ of election to my office and I will inform the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of the completion of the by-election and the successful candidate.
- Friday, June 2 – Deadline for candidates to file their audited return of election expenses.
- Tuesday, September 5 – Deadline for registered political parties to file their audited return of election expenses.

Past practice in Saskatchewan has been that the leading candidate after the preliminary count is added as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (by legislation). Our research indicates this has happened in most, if not all, of the by-elections in Saskatchewan dating back several years. While I can understand the appeal from a legislator's point of view, I have serious concerns that this undermines the democratic processes of our province. By law, the results of the election are not official until after the final count, and again, by law, there is a period of time where candidates or business managers can apply for recounts or additions. Even in situations where the margin of victory is not close, such legislation is potentially problematic.

Thank you,



Dr. Michael Boda
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan

For additional information on the Saskatoon Meewasin by-election, including a link to all CEO Communiques, visit <http://www.elections.sk.ca/voters/meewasin-by-election/>.